

SOCIAL ACTION

Labor Troubles and the Local Church

by

Albert W. Palmer
Frank W. McCulloch
Stoddard Lane

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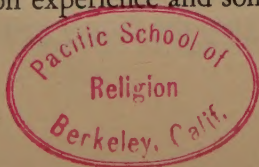
Labor Troubles and the Local Church

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

As a result of high emotional tensions created in Newton, Iowa in the summer of 1938 by a strike in the principal industry of the town — the Maytag Washing Machine factory — the Congregational minister, Reverend E. A. Ramige, was asked to resign by the board of trustees of the church and his resignation was accepted by a substantial majority vote.

Incidents in the Maytag strike were played up by the press and by *Life* with many illustrations; and the resignation of Mr. Ramige received attention in the editorial columns of *Advance* and *The Christian Century*. The latter paper also published a letter written by the Methodist minister in Newton, Reverend Leslie B. Logan, criticising its editorial position.

In view of this publicity, the Council for Social Action requested a committee composed of the Reverend Albert W. Palmer, president of the Chicago Theological Seminary, the Reverend Stoddard Lane, pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, and Mr. Frank McCulloch of Chicago, industrial secretary of the Council for Social Action, to investigate and report on the Newton Situation. This report is now presented in three parts. Part I, an account of a visit to Newton by Stoddard Lane and Albert Palmer; Part II, an account of a visit by Frank McCulloch, who was especially asked to take note of the labor relations involved; Part III, some practical suggestions for the conduct of churches and ministers facing similar cases of industrial disturbance in the future. No attempt is made in Part III to make a final analysis of the Newton situation or to assess either praise or blame. Instead of this, to present a brief manual of suggestions for churches and ministers facing similar situations. Some of the suggestions grow out of the Newton experience and some have no reference to it.



Part I. A Day in Newton, Iowa

by Albert W. Palmer and Stoddard Lane

Before going to Newton we knew certain general facts about the situation: Newton is a town of about 12,000, 18 miles east of Des Moines. It is a one industry town, largely built around the Maytag Washing Machine factory. A sit-down strike, bitterly contested and involving some violence, had divided the town into two factions. Because of actions and attitudes which were construed as favoring the labor group, the Congregational minister, Mr. E. A. Ramige, had been forced to resign.

Newton is a typical Iowa town with broad streets and modest homes. It is built around an open square with a courthouse in the middle. Forty years ago it had 3,000 inhabitants and normally might have grown to 4,000 or 5,000 as a county-seat town had not a larger population been attracted by the Maytag factory. This factory began modestly some forty years ago and now employs some 1,500 men.

As long as Mr. Frederick Maytag, the founder of the factory, lived, things went well. The elder Mr. Maytag was interested in the town, gave generously to churches and the Y.M.C.A. and to all good causes. He was also interested in his employees, knew many of them by name, gave them a great picnic every year on his birthday and often helped them out in trouble. If it was an industrial autocracy which grew up under his control, still it was a thoroughly benevolent autocracy looking in the direction of welfare work, pensions and employee-regarding organization of production to avoid long periods of unemployment. This company recognizes that "its labor market is peculiar" as the officials phrase it, by which they mean that the workers are all local people for whose steady employment the factory feels a large measure of responsibility. To this end it has, on occasion, lowered prices and sacrificed profits that it might keep the factory going and the payroll active.

A new era in Newton industry was caused by the Wagner Labor Relations Law which prescribed collective bargaining. When a vote was taken on labor organization the workers chose to affiliate with the C.I.O. by a vote of 1200 to 279 and late in the spring of 1938 when the Company felt obliged to make a pay cut of 10 per cent, the union struck. To organize the strikers a prominent C.I.O. leader, William Sentner, came in from St. Louis and both by his presence and the untactful if not actually inflammatory nature of his speeches and tactics aroused deep local resentment.

To understand this one must realize that the whole town is economically dependent on this one industry. When the Maytag payroll stops, the town folds up economically. Consequently an "outside agitator," who spoke unkindly of the Maytags and the luxury in which they lived and who urged the strikers to tighten their belts and picket the works, creating a situation in which some violence occurred and more was likely to occur, was decidedly unpopular with all the business and professional element in Newton.

Now it is precisely this business and professional group which makes up the backbone, especially the financial vertebrae, of the churches. The Maytags inclined toward the Presbyterian, but other officials and the wealthy widow of the original inventor were in the Congregational Church. The Methodist Church, with 1377 resident members, has about one-third of its membership among the working people, but only a small proportion of these favored the Union. The secretary of the C.I.O., curiously enough, however, was a Presbyterian, graduate of the local high school and a former bellboy in the Maytag Hotel.

It is hard for an outsider to realize the high pressure of partisanship and the degree of emotional hysteria which can develop in a town like Newton under the strain of a prolonged labor dispute. Everybody lines up on one side or the other and

everybody hates a neutral. Free speech and fair play have few advocates, and group loyalties are rigorously insisted upon.

In the midst of this situation stood Mr. Ramige, the new pastor of the Congregational Church. He had come to Newton in October 1936, just five months before the workers organized their union and about a year and a half before the strike occurred. He had been popular with his church, which responded to his able preaching and devoted pastoral work, raised his salary and presented him with an automobile. They felt that they had indeed found an unexpected treasure in their minister. Yet a few months after the strike began the trustees requested his resignation and the church accepted it. What had happened?

The various charges against him which are passed on to a visitor are curious in some respects and thought provoking in others. First of all, there is absolutely no question as to his high personal character and integrity. Even his severest critic recognizes the quality of his Christian life and ideals. But, while universally granting the quality of his character, the people interviewed had much the same line of criticisms.

One group felt that he was indiscreet in that he showed too much interest in and sympathy for the labor group, in spite of suggestions from his board of trustees that he had better keep out of the whole situation. They objected that he visited the C.I.O. headquarters, on one occasion to take them a copy of *Advance* which had in it an article favorable to the C.I.O.* He also visited the picket line. Such contacts indicated a sympathetic attitude toward an organization that was regarded as revolutionary, communistic and destructive of law and order and the peace of the community. Hence people of other churches began to taunt leading Congregationalists with "How much longer are you going to stand for a minister who hobnobs with the C.I.O." Some of the leading financial givers in

*"Why I believe in the C.I.O.," by Harland Manchester, *Advance*, Feb. 1938.

the church were very resentful of what Mr. Ramige did and of more that he was reported to have done.

What other counts against him? A brother minister became convinced that he was a real menace to the town because of his C.I.O. sympathies. And so when, early in the strife, Mr. Ramige proposed that the ministers' association adopt a resolution suggesting tolerance of the union, this minister, although the resolution was never adopted nor even formally voted upon, passed it on to a local editor who did not print it but privately circulated copies among wealthy and influential people where it would be interpreted as damaging to Mr. Ramige's standing. When questioned as to this unhelpful, if indeed not unethical, treatment of a brother minister he explained that he hated to do such a thing but that the community was in such danger, and he felt Mr. Ramige's influence to be so clearly on the side of lawlessness, that a departure from the strict code of ministerial ethics was justified.

What was this allegedly inflammatory document? "In view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the laboring men of Newton have voted to be a part of the C.I.O. union and in so doing are only within their legitimate rights, we, the following undersigned members of the Newton Ministerial Association, wish to express our conviction that the non-labor groups of our city should be willing to respect the wishes of the majority of our laboring class and that there ought to be no bitterness of feeling or of action expressed toward them."

When this document was read by Mr. Lane and Mr. Palmer to a vice-president of the Maytag Company who had expressed his conviction that Mr. Ramige's object was to stir up strife and hatred among the workers, the official discounted the resolution by asserting that it was not sincere but only a blind to cover up Mr. Ramige's attitude. This judgment concerning Mr. Ramige was, however, repudiated by every one else interviewed, except the minister in question. Most people felt that

Mr. Ramige meant well but was too openly in sympathy with the union. At no time did he interject the strike situation into his preaching or other public services; but, from his private conversations and his visits to C. I. O. headquarters, observers concluded his sympathies were with the union. It is interesting to note that the secretary of the C.I.O. told us that the only advice Mr. Ramige had ever offered him was that his pickets were too numerous. It was also from this labor secretary that we learned that Mr. Ramige went personally to the Governor of Iowa pleading with him for the arbitration which is provided for by Iowa law.

What else did Mr. Ramige do which might account for the prejudices of the community and the action of his church? At the beginning of the strike in May he wrote a personal letter to Mr. E. H. Maytag. How this letter came to popular knowledge we do not know. It was not published openly in the paper, but was circulated subterraneously in typewritten form, as was the resolution which the ministers did not adopt. The entire letter follows:

"I do not know what your personal philosophy is, but the curse of our whole economic structure today is that it has that anti-Christian false philosophy which sets up as its final end and purpose that of profits and the profit motive rather than the meeting of human need and human welfare. The Christian way of life leads one to be willing to take a loss rather than cause other human beings to suffer. You have a most unusual opportunity right now of demonstrating what the Christian spirit can be like. I am wishing the best for you."

The climax came when the *Des Moines Register*, the largest daily in Iowa, a progressive but by no means radical paper, printed an editorial reviewing the Newton strike and advocating the repeal of the Iowa Criminal Syndicalist law. Mr. Ramige sent the following commendation to the editor, who published it:

"I want to express my appreciation for your editorial on the New-

ton situation entitled, 'Syndicalism, C.I.O. and Arbitration.' We people of Iowa should feel very grateful that we have a paper that is so unbiased and impartial and free to express itself on controversial subjects in an open-minded way."

After the publication of this letter the storm broke. The church trustees immediately demanded Mr. Ramige's resignation. Criticisms and even hatred were poured out upon him. One example is the following letter from an important, influential and wealthy elderly lady in his church.

"I am writing this in protest of the attitude you have taken in the present labor situation in Newton.

"When I read a copy of the letter you wrote Mr. E. H. Maytag, also a copy of the resolutions you had prepared (which were never acted upon), it is almost unbelievable that our church should have a minister, the leader of our young people, with communistic tendencies.

"Since your sympathies are with the poor, unfortunate and misguided people, I am wondering why you accepted a call to a nice church, built by our most substantial people and manufacturers, with a nice parsonage to live in.

"You have humiliated our church. If you did it in the name of Christianity, I am afraid there are not many Christians in your congregation." (This letter was published in *The Christian Century*).

There are many side eddies to this whirlpool. Mr. Ramige is accused in Newton of driving Wm. Sentner, the C.I.O. organizer, around town in the car the church had given him, some even claiming he drove Mr. Sentner as far as St. Louis in it. Mr. Kirkwood, the secretary of the local union, said he doubted if Mr. Ramige had ever met Sentner. He sent the following telegram to Mr. Sentner:

"I know this will sound silly but did you ever go for a ride with Dr. Ramige of the Newton Congregational Church? Wire me immediately. The church is investigating the cause of his discharge. This is given as one of the reasons."

Mr. Sentner's prompt telegraphic reply was:

"Re Ramige, never spent a minute in personal contact with him. Only ride was one his board gave Ramige out of Newton."

In the midst of the strike Mr. Ramige had been commissioned to go to a conference at Grinnell College to secure a speaker for a United Church Service. The conference recommended Arnold Forster, a distinguished English labor leader in this country speaking on peace. The Newton paper played up Forster's labor affiliations in England with the result that Mr. Ramige's trustees asked him to cancel the invitation lest something indiscreet be said at the open-air meeting and the reputation of the Congregational Church suffer in consequence. It was also whispered about that Mr. Ramige contributed articles to the *Lookout Bulletin*, a daily news sheet published by the strikers. But as the articles in that sheet were anonymous no one seemed able to prove the accusation and Mr. Ramige denies such contributions but thinks that extracts from the *Advance* article on the C.I.O. may have been quoted.

Why then did Mr. Ramige have to go. Our reasons emerge:

1. With the best will in the world to understand and help the under-dog, he did not pay equal attention to both sides in a bitter controversy. If a minister chooses to "hob" with labor he must also "nob" with management or else be in danger of appearing to be partisan.

2. He was the victim of more or less concealed attacks from people outside his own church who taunted his church leaders with his alleged sympathy with the strikers and circulated rumors derogatory to him.

3. His church trustees lost courage when confronted with serious shrinkage of income because certain large givers disapproved of any minister who had anything whatever to do with a labor organization such as the C.I.O.

4. He had so recently come to Newton that he had as yet no deep rootage in the love and confidence of the community.

There is one salient problem, which no one in the church or the city seemed to be aware of. This problem is the attitude of the labor group toward religion and the church. The great majority of the workers in the Maytag factory do not attend

the protestant churches. The Methodists and Lutherans have a few working people, mostly from the "back-to-work" or non-union group. This small protestant membership is not unusual of course in industrial communities for the workers are often Poles or Lithuanians or other nationalities traditionally Roman Catholic. The surprising fact about Newton is that the factory workers are not "foreign" or Catholic. They are practically all Americans, boys from Iowa farms or from the mining areas in the southern part of the state. They have a protestant heritage. The Catholic church cannot serve them as it so often ministers to the laboring class in industrial communities. In Newton such service is a protestant responsibility. The one minister who expressed a desire to secure recognition and fair-play for the workers' side was forced to leave his church. Will this action have no effect upon the workers' conception of religion and upon their attitude toward the church? So far as we could discover, no one in Newton is thinking about this consideration.

In closing this account of our visit to Newton, it should be noted that we did not leave without consulting local Congregational authorities. We met and talked with almost all of the members of the Advisory Committee of the Grinnell Association to which the Newton Church belongs, to the superintendent of the Iowa Conference of Congregational Churches, to the chairman of the board of trustees of the local church, the chairman of its pulpit supply committee, to the secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce, who happens to be a Congregationalist, and to other members of the church. Everywhere we were received with courtesy. There was no resentment at our investigation and no attempt to hinder it. We did not employ secrecy but announced to all on whom we called that we were representing national Congregationalism and seeking to ascertain the facts in order that we might gather from them a measure of wisdom in procedure for the guidance of other churches and ministers who may face similar tense industrial situations.

Part II. The Industrial Background

by Frank W. McCulloch

What was it that transformed the "City of 12,000 Friendly Folks" into two bitter, hostile camps? Shattered the friendships of families and neighbors? Dried up the wells of business and overflowed relief rolls? Removed a pastor and scarred the churches? Contributed to a governor's defeat and produced a dramatic challenge by state authority of the federal sovereignty?

Interviews with company, union, business and professional leaders in Newton shed considerable light on the industrial conflict which stirred up these eruptions.

A. F. L. Maytag and the Rise of the Maytag Co.

A miniature history of America itself is strikingly presented in the career of Frederick L. Maytag and the development of the Maytag Company. "A typical story of 'get ahead' America," Iowa's Governor Hammill called the life of Mr. Maytag in 1926, on the occasion of the presentation to him of the "largest gold medallion ever made."

A covered wagon brought Mr. Maytag as a child from Illinois, where he was born in 1857, to an Iowa farm. Leaving the farm at 23, he secured employment in an implement house in Newton, then a town of 1500. Soon he saved enough from his \$50 a month salary to buy a half interest in the business. Leaving this company in 1893 he joined in setting up the Persons Band Cutter & Self Feeder Co., makers of self feeders. Corn-huskers, shredders and later washing machines were added to the line, with the help of the inventive genius of Howard Snyder, who had come to the company in 1896.

In 1909, Maytag bought out the outstanding interests in the company, and it became The Maytag Company.

From an original investment of \$2,400 in 1893, the company came to have a working capital of \$5,452,356 in 1938. The

Newton plant, occupying a site of nearly eight acres with thirteen main buildings, was at one time estimated to use each day 30,000 lbs. of aluminum, 160,000 lbs. of iron and to machine 75,000 castings requiring 300,000 operations. The capacity output is 2,000 machines daily—about one apiece for the peak employment rolls of 2,000. Distributors to the number of 7,000 market these products, and nearly 7,000 stockholders turn eager eyes on directors' meetings when dividends are to be discussed.

Net income of the company, after depreciation and taxes, reached a high of \$6,838,884 in 1929. After a low level of \$100,772 in 1932, the subsequent record of the company was as follows

1933	\$1,204,503
1934	1,960,836
1935	2,581,096
1936	2,816,900
1937	2,292,706

This pick-up in income permitted making up of all back dividends (not fully paid in the worst depression years) on the \$6 and \$3 preferred classes of stock, and after a five-year lapse, fifty cents a share was voted in 1936 and again for 1937 on the common stock. This may not have satisfied the holders of common who recalled receiving \$1.50 a share in 1928, \$2.00 in 1929, and \$1.87½ in 1930 before the lean years set in. They must have noted with pleasure, however, that the price range of their stock on the New York Exchange which had been \$6-\$1 in 1932 revived in 1936 to \$21½-\$13½ per share.

During the business collapse of 1929-1932 and in the years following, general economic conditions were not the only obstacle to confront the company. New competitors had also entered the field and carved out parts of the market. In place of the smaller companies, previously met so successfully by the Maytag Company, it now found General Electric, General

Motors, Norge, Westinghouse, Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck—large enterprises with aggressive promotion of many lines of goods, including washing machines. Only the continued technical improvement of its production methods, the adjustment of its wage schedules and a drastic reduction in prices (a machine comparable to that which sold for \$155 in 1929 is priced today at \$85) enabled Maytag to succeed in the face of the new competition.

Maytag's Other Services

"A striking success in business like Senator Maytag's is greater than any political triumph or recognition." These words of Iowa's governor in 1926 were significant of the general esteem in which Frederick L. Maytag was held. This esteem was not lowered when, during the depression years, he was credited with saving four Jasper County banks from insolvency. The Maytag Farms were likewise models of beauty and efficiency, and Maytag cattle were also prize-winners.

His services, moreover, were not rendered to the business world alone. Ten years on the Newton city council, two years as Mayor, and four sessions as a state senator combined to make a record of extensive public service.

Newton citizens pointed perhaps even more proudly to his many contributions to civic projects and charitable institutions. In addition to his million-dollar investment in the air-conditioned Maytag Hotel, a YMCA building (\$250,000), the Salvation Army Citadel (\$75,000), Maytag Park (\$250,000), a tuberculosis sanatorium (\$150,000) and numerous other large gifts to churches, hospitals, and colleges attested to his expansive generosity. Friends who lost money in following his investment were later made whole by his insistent return of their losses.

In view of these contributions, fellow-townsmen did not begrudge Mr. Maytag his acquisition of the 400-acre estate on Lake Geneva, Wisconsin or later his home in Beverly Hills,

California, or his son's purchase of a Florida island. Such signs of affluence, however, probably led to reported threats of kidnapping of Mr. Maytag in 1933. At his death in March of 1937, he left an estate valued around \$7,000,000, and was mourned as Iowa's "first citizen."

B. Labor Relations Under F. L. Maytag

"It is not the dollar that is the goal of our striving. Our goal is to produce a worthy product, to make the business of living happier and more comfortable, to give employment under pleasant and prosperous conditions to as many as possible."
—Frederick L. Maytag, 1926.

No one doubted that the benevolence shown by Mr. Maytag to the City of Newton, marked also his relations with his employees. Most striking evidence of this was his gift of more than \$132,000 to the Maytag workers on the occasion of his 70th birthday in 1927. Fifty dollars for each year of service was a welcome gift.

Wages were admittedly higher for his employees than in the industry generally. Company officials stated they were as much as eleven to twenty per cent above the average. Living conditions for almost everyone were comfortable. The slums present in so many American cities, even the small ones, are not to be found in Newton. Small five and six room homes, with lawns and gardens abound. The 'other side of the tracks' is impossible to find.

A number of persons felt that these facts were not fully understood by Mr. Ramige. "He had the wrong slant on labor here. He seemed to bring with him the ideas he formed about labor when he resided in the east. He just couldn't seem to understand that the squalor and miserable living conditions of labor in the east did not exist in Newton."

Of course there were advantages also for the Maytags in their generous handling of employees. In 1927 Mr. Maytag was

quoted as saying "While I receive a great deal of satisfaction in giving our people more money than they could obtain anywhere else, nevertheless it has paid to do it. It has filled our ranks with men who have the character and ability to do the job as it should be done."

But there were drawbacks in the situation. The management—and this meant "F. L."—made *all* the decisions. "We knew he tried to do well by the men and to be just in the situation as he saw it. But we knew too that he didn't take our counsel and desires into account at all before making up his mind," said one former employee now in public office in Newton.

A younger worker, active in the union, asserted that, when the relief and benefit plan was put in, "we knew it was a good thing but the office ran it all. The deductions from our wages for the Community Chest were okay too. But the first I heard of it was when they posted a company bulletin just announcing it would be done. After the YMCA was built, too, they didn't ask you whether you'd join. The foreman just said 'What *kind* of membership do you want?' and we well understood we had to join."

Older employees told of the contract not to join a union which they had to sign, until such contracts were outlawed by legislation.

Not all of the Maytag employees criticized the company on these grounds. "A fellow could keep his job and get ahead there all right so long as he worked hard. Everything was fine until the union came along," said one leader of the back-to-work group. And even those who objected to the autocratic methods of "F. L." and later joined the union maintained a friendly loyalty to him and to the company.

The number of men who "wanted a say" increased with the influx into Newton of men from the mining areas. In those areas, organized labor had been a force to be reckoned with. Their lowly voices had been heard. The passage of the Wagner

Act also gave impetus to the sentiment for organization in Newton. An admittedly unfortunate choice of production manager also added to the grievances of the workers.

On July 14, 1937, Frederick L. Maytag would have been eighty years old. In the early days of 1937, persons close to him revealed that he had astonishing plans for a wide distribution of his wealth to his employees on the coming birthday. Business men and associates in many walks of life were planning a pageant to laud his colorful and successful career. Perhaps the pageant—and this distribution—would have helped to carry on unruffled the labor relations of the company. But neither took place. Almost four months before the appointed time, Mr. Maytag died. By his will he gave bequests to many friends and associates, including janitors and elevator operators—but no distribution was directed to the employees in the production departments of the company.

C. Labor Relations After F. L. Maytag's Death

Some observers have claimed E. H. Maytag did not bring to the company's management the same spirit that marked his father's operation. It is difficult to discover proofs of this changed spirit.

E. H. Maytag was credited with the creation of an employee benefit trust, involving a personal contribution of \$50,000 annually for several years. A business journal has asserted that it was he also who suggested a plan under which 500 homes were built for Newton workers between 1925 and 1930. Personal friends urge with conviction that he had from the start a full and ready sympathy for his employees.

In any case, active unionization of the Maytag employees began in April, 1937, when so many other American wage-earners were also striking out for collective bargaining rights. The Wagner Act had just been declared constitutional, and many businesses showed a disposition to accept the Act as the law of the land.

Addressing the first meeting was "Shady" Lewis, president of the Iowa State Federation of Labor (A. F. of L.). Cooperating with the expressed desire of the men for C.I.O. affiliation, however, he led a second meeting the next week with an organizer from the United Electrical Radio & Machine Workers of America (C.I.O.) and the drive was on. The campaign was short and sweet—for the Union men. By May 25 the papers announced a "temporary contract" between Maytag and the U. E. R. A few weeks later the permanent contract was signed recognizing the Union as a bargaining agency and calling for a five per cent wage increase, certain seniority rights and organized grievance procedures.

A few months later the production manager was replaced, and operation under the contract, with the exceptions of a few flurries of stoppages at the start became smoother on all sides.

Perhaps the first hurdle was too easy. At any rate the enthusiasm for unionism spread rapidly in Newton. "Let's make Newton a model C.I.O. town." And newspaper employees, retail store clerks and others were approached by the apostles of the new freedom. If the "friendly folks" of Newton were not alarmed by the Maytag agreement with the C.I.O., their attitude changed abruptly when the local Montgomery, Ward store suffered a strike that brought on mass picket lines, crowded streets and sidewalks and a jostling if not of people themselves, at least of their accepted ideas of what was fit and proper in small town business practice. The reaction to C.I.O. had begun.

As May 1, 1938, expiration date of the Maytag contract with the U. E. R. approached, disagreements appeared. In March, the Union requested Governor Nelson G. Kraschel to appoint an arbitration board to iron out some difficulties.

In April, negotiations for a new contract met with a stiffer company attitude. Denial that the Union any longer represented a majority of the employees resulted in a consent election

for collective bargaining agent. Prior to the election, there were rumors that Edward W. Ford of Chicago, attorney for the company, had promised a "closed-shop" agreement if the Union polled 90 per cent of the vote. To scotch this rumor, a group of employees hired a room in the Hotel Maytag. There they took numerous fellow-employees to exhibit a letter of denial from Mr. Ford to the company manager, who also resided in the hotel.

The election, at any rate, resulted in a vote of 1188 for the U.E.R. (C.I.O.) to 269 against it. Discussions continued between the company and the Union through some twenty or more sessions. A written transcript of these efforts was carefully made by the company that showed clearly there had been negotiations. No agreement, however, was reached. The company proposed a ten per cent cut, with wages to be 'kept at least five per cent above the level of the industry.' The Union refused. It proposed arbitration under the Iowa laws. The company declined.

On May 9, 1938, the company posted notices of a ten per cent wage cut, with the possibility of certain further cuts up to another ten per cent in the future (the level in no case, however, to fall below five per cent in excess of the average for the industry.) The employees then walked out in what has generally been called a strike, but what the Union chose to call a "lockout."

D. The Strike

The following are a few of the high-lights of the struggle:

- May 10th. Picketing begins; worker roughed up; no plant operation.
- June 4th. Two hundred employees demand relief from county.
- June 8th. Wage parleys broken off.
- June 12th. Back-to-work group claims 500 signed.
- June 22nd. Permanent injunction against mass picketing, etc.
- June 23rd. Governor refuses Union request for arbitration board; 350 men occupy plant and stage sit-down.
- July 1st. Negotiations reopened; sitters vacate plant.

- July 5th. Governor urges acceptance of ten per cent cut; Union urges arbitration.
- July 6th. Indictments for conspiracy, etc., returned against some Union men.
- July 8th. Mass picketing renewed; mayor, sheriff call for volunteer deputies.
- July 9th. Governor appoints arbitration board; no assent by company.
- July 14th. Union leaders sentenced to six months and \$500 for contempt of injunction; court offers parole and non-prosecution of other cases, if strike called off.
- July 16th. Arbitrators report; approve wage cut on conditions.
- July 17th. Union accepts arbitrators' proposal; company declines.
- July 18th. Plant reopens; 450 men return to work.
- July 19th. Picketing renewed; plant-bound trucks stopped; troops ordered.
- July 20th. Troops arrive; three non-union men seriously hurt in fighting at plant gate; governor orders plant kept closed.
- July 30th. Governor orders N.L.R.B. hearing stopped.
- Aug. 2nd. N.L.R.B. orders hearings renewed in Des Moines on August 4th.
- Aug. 3rd. Governor orders plant reopen on company terms; 12 Union men not to be rehired; revises order on N.L.R.B. Union rejects company terms but votes return to work "under protest."
- Aug. 4th. 1400 men return to work. (Negotiations over contract, hearing before N.L.R.B. and criminal prosecutions still remain unsettled. Dec. 1, 1938.)

E. Main Issues

a. The Wage Cut

The Board of Arbitration appointed by Governor Kraschel under Iowa's law for voluntary arbitration in labor disputes included a banker, a union leader and a lawyer. The Maytag Company, as it had a right to do, declined to submit nominees for the Board or to be bound by its findings.

George Umbreit, vice-president, however, presented to the Board considerable material on the wage cut designed to show: 1937 wage for steady workers averaged \$1,433. Maytag 1937 wages well above level of washing machine industry. Maytag wages 20% above comparable mid-west factory level.

Living costs in Newton lower than in competitor's towns.
Sales: 1937, 1st half—\$9,057,152; 1938, 1st half—\$4,352,176.
Net Profit: 1937, 1st half—\$1,305,269; 1938, 1st half—\$85,828.
Annual requirement for preferred stock dividends—\$1,083,000.
Only \$1 in dividends paid on common stock in seven years.

The Union representative, William Sentner from St. Louis, argued to the contrary:

Reduction would lower annual Newton purchasing power by \$300,000.
Newton living costs high; families moving away.
Some employees receive only fifty cents per hour.
Assembly line workers' income, 1938, 1st half—\$379.81.

(working only 66 days)

58 other union contracts recently renewed without wage reductions.
Back dividends on preferred stock all paid up.
1937 profit exceeded forty per cent of booked capitalization.
Total earned surplus: end of 1936—\$2,524,767; 1937—\$2,907,926.

The arbitrators found that the Company had proved its case by a preponderance of the evidence. Two of them recommended operation for sixty days at the old wage rate; if no agreement then Company might make the 10 per cent cut, with 50c. per hour minimum, and further cuts to be arbitrated. The third arbitrator recommended instead an immediate 10 per cent cut (with the 50c. minimum); but added a proposal that if, on June 30, 1939, the profits for the year just ended, should exceed preferred dividend requirements, fifty per cent of the excess should be used to restore the wage cut.

While the Union accepted the majority proposal which resembled closely an early offer by the Company (except for the 60-day feature), and later assented to the minority proposal as well, the Company declined to sign a contract on either basis.

Perhaps the issue is fairly summed up in the words of a leading Newton business man, himself a good friend of the Maytags, and an outspoken enemy of the Union:

"The Maytag Company had a good surplus. They could have operated all year and paid the old wages without serious financial trouble. But naturally they wanted to run the plant without an operating loss. So they planned to cut the wages."

b. The Closed Shop and Check-off

Company representatives held out firmly against the demands for the closed shop and a check-off system of dues collections. They pointed out that men desiring not to join the Union should not have that right taken away. The Company's co-operation in dues collections through the check-off was likewise deemed inadvisable in that stage of the Company's development. They conceded, however, that in some circumstances, there might be no objections to such procedure.

The Union leaders argued that the Company had employed the closed shop and check-off systems in operating the relief and benefit association. "Why not, then, protect economic welfare as well as health by those methods?" The Union later offered a modified check-off system, dependent on the request of the individual worker, expressed at least every six months.

The Arbitration Board agreed with the Company's contention that it was inadvisable to press those issues at that time.

c. Federal-State Conflict

The press of the nation paid little attention to the strike in Newton during the first two and one-half-months and even after the troops came. When Governor Kraschel issued his order barring the National Labor Relations Board hearings, however, the nation read of the challenge in large headlines.

So what began as a family row gave promise of provoking what Robert Casey called "a minor league civil war." State proponents defended the governor's order as a proper exercise of the state's police powers. Federal advocates decried the challenge of the nation's authority by one of its subdivisions. And opponents of the NLRB pricked up their ears as a new method of stopping its operations seemed about to be discovered.

Two days later the Board in Washington ordered the Examiner, Madison Hill, to continue with the hearings, but in Des Moines. The Board's order refused to acquiesce in the use

of martial law to suspend civil rights guaranteed by Federal enactments. Its citation of Supreme Court precedents seemed to carry weight with students of the legal problem. The order added:

"If the Governor persists in state-wide application of the order, the Board sees no alternative but to proceed with the hearings under the authority of the national power which it exercises. Any other course would be a subordination of the national to the state authorities in matters affecting national sovereignty and of the civil to the military authorities in times of peace. Both are abhorrent to American institutions. Both have been held improper and illegal by our highest courts."

No connection between the two events clearly appears. But in point of fact, on the day before the hearings were to resume Governor Kraschel issued his order that the plant be reopened, on the Company's terms, the following morning, with the aid of the military, if necessary. He then modified his original prohibition against the Board's hearings so that it applied only to Jasper County.

The Federal-state conflict was over—and so was the strike.

d. Violence

Many of the Union activities drew the fire of the Arbitration Board. The eight-day sit-down demonstration, the mass picketing and the barring of entrance to the plant were declared unlawful by the Board and by the local courts. Participants, while credited with being "upstanding citizens with a record for obedience to law," were on this occasion misled and badly advised.

Some townsfolk were more bitter in their comments. "Those outside leaders and Communists transformed the Maytag men into a lawless crowd. They damned the courts, derided the police, insulted the Maytags for their possession of property and defied all employers," said a leading Newton publisher, in whose own plant some organization was attempted.

Until the brief outbreak of street fighting and serious injury to three non-union men on July 20, however, the only casualties generally admitted were a few persons shoved and one torn shirt. Probably the bitter attacks on the Maytag family in the public utterances of the St. Louis organizer who was an admitted Communist, brought more resentment even than the reported threats of violence to non-union men.

"Yes, we made mistakes," a Union leader agreed, "and it was too bad that hot-heads provoked the fight the morning the troops arrived." But they asserted there were excesses by the agencies of law and order also in the wholesale arrests that were made. Unusual to say the least, they claimed, was the offer of the judge to parole the Union leaders sentenced for contempt and to secure the dismissal of all further prosecutions if they would call off the strike. Other sworn testimony before the Labor Board told of the prosecuting attorney granting immunity from grand jury indictment to a Union defendant who signed a back-to-work card.

"The few unfortunate outbreaks were largely provoked by the constant exaggerated charges that 'law and order has broken down in Newton,' said a local official. "The Union boys weren't really a lawless group. When the crowds around one of the stores got too large, I just suggested two policemen be commissioned to keep the folks moving. It took away the audience, and things quieted down right away.

"I remember too," he recalled, "when they wanted me to issue warrants and set \$1,000 bail on some of the boys who interfered with a police car. We finally agreed not to set such high bail for the maximum fine was \$100 and next day before the arrests could even be made the boys came in and surrendered."

In general Company representatives interviewed expressed much less agitation about the charges of lawlessness and violence than the townspeople who took their side. An experienced

news reporter attributed the outbursts of Union men to "a strange new sense of power that they seemed to get from being in the Union and which they didn't exactly know how to use."

e. Back-to-Work Movement

"We received no support whatsoever from the Maytag Company" declared the head of the back-to-work movement. "We couldn't. It was against the law."

His group claimed in the heat of the struggle to have enlisted 611 of those on the payroll May 9th and 178 more previously employed. Only 462 unchallenged names remained on the list, the Union claimed, after supervisors, draftsmen, and other ineligible workers were subtracted. The number in any case was substantial, and approximately 450 returned to work when the plant reopened July 18.

The origin of the back-to-work movement was only hazily recalled in the Labor Board hearing. The leaders were the same men active in the hotel room incident before the collective bargaining election in April. The cards for signatures seemed to come from thin air—passing, on the way, through the hands of the Mayor's brother and the executor of the estate of the Company's founder, for advice on form. Leading business men consented to give their counsel and support. Other taxpayers eyeing the long and expensive relief rolls likewise lent their aid.

About this time neighbors who had worked together for the Maytag Company for years and had been affable during the first of the strike stopped speaking to each other.

"We just wanted our jobs back," said a back-to-work representative. "The company had treated us all right. Many of us were much better off than we'd ever been before. Maytag could have shut the plant for five years and not felt it. There was just no use in getting his back up."

Union members testified to being solicited by company foremen and threatened with loss of their jobs if they didn't sign

up. Foremen denied these charges, and company officials plainly asserted they had no connection with the movement.

Veteran observers saw the movement as but one phase of a total situation paralleling the famous "Mohawk Valley Plan." A strong combination of community forces was certainly arrayed against the Union: the press, the courts, business and farm groups and churches.

"We were out to join every force possible to combat C.I.O. viciousness," said the editor. "There was no middle ground. When Ramige came out with his resolution of sympathy and support for the C.I.O. and expressing the hope they would win the strike, of course we bucked him." Apparently no one claimed the church had no concern with such conflicts. In fact the minister of another church was very active in many groups opposing the Union. "Several Maytag workers said of me," he reported, 'If he'd stayed out, we could have won,' And I think that's partly true."

A leading Iowa paper that would not "line up" received such comments from Newton persons as "This is the last business from us until your paper changes its line." A delegation of other advertisers urged the repudiation of an editorial criticizing the criminal syndicalism law and its use in labor disputes. Other observers asserted that all this was merely the reaction of a healthy American country town to the intrusion of racketeering unionism and communistic lawlessness. And the Union, on its side, was charged with using all manner of threats and intimidation to line up the Maytag workers with the C.I.O.

There was no middle ground. And today in Newton, four months after the re-opening of the plant, it is still perilous to try to be a neutral.

f. Collective Bargaining

"In the public discussions, the issues of the wage-cut, closed shop and alleged violence bulked large," said an experienced

newspaper man. "But the paramount issue underlying all the strategic moves before the arbitrators, the courts, the Governor and the Labor Board was just this: 'Shall the Maytag Company have a C.I.O. union among its employees?' "

Neither officially nor unofficially would the company leaders admit this. They expressed complete willingness to deal with their employees collectively. They signed one contract with the Union, negotiated at length over another. For most of the local leadership of the Union, they voiced respect and praise—but not for the Union organizer. Said a company official, "There are a lot of level-headed chaps in the Union. Our resentment was not against unionism, but against Sentner with his bitter tirades against Maytag."

A few others conceded there might be some merit in the general objectives of the Union. A professional man, trustee of the Congregational Church, stated, "It probably wasn't unreasonable for the men to want more control than they had in the past. They want a hand-shake, not a pat on the head."

Among many Newton groups, however, there is no doubt there was outspoken opposition to collective bargaining with the U.E.R.M.W.A. "Unionism is all right in theory. But it has no place in Newton," said the pastor who opposed Mr. Ramige so effectively. Business men close to E. H. Maytag also affirmed during the strike and after that Newton was not big enough for both the Maytag management and the C.I.O.

Neither did all of the company's acts exhibit a positive eagerness to sign again with the C.I.O. Even before the collective bargaining election in April, opposition to the Union blossomed in the hotel-room incident with which some company officials were identified. All of the Union's pleas for arbitration under the Iowa law were rejected by the company. Then the arbitrator's recommendations, which conceded most of the company's claims, were likewise turned down. The terms

of the wage-cut announced May 9, while necessary probably to maintain an operating profit for the year, were not absolutely essential to the continued financial stability of the company—and the terms on which work was finally resumed were even less favorable.

Certainly the Union felt its very existence was in danger. If it submitted to the announcement of a wage-cut that was not negotiated and agreed, collective bargaining for them became an empty shell. "The main thing we wanted was an end to the absolute domination of the management," said the Union secretary. "We have been finding a new sense of freedom and security through the Union and our members today are about the only ones in Newton who aren't afraid to speak their mind. These things we don't intend to lose."

Whatever the intentions of the Company, it is difficult not to conclude that unionism was the main issue in Newton. Shall the benevolent domination by management give way to a control shared with a Union group? Are the initial difficulties with inexperienced or misguided labor leaders too great an obstacle to be faced in the hope of subsequent harmony and greater industrial democracy?

Newton has not yet answered these questions for itself. Neither has America. When they do, it is likely, as pointed out by the Commission on labor relations in England and Sweden, that both Newton and other parts of America will enter a more peaceful and democratic phase of their industrial development. Even ministers may then be safe to express opinions concerning such issues, or at least free to be neutral.

But in the meantime, is there no way for the churches that seek to understand and interpret these problems to maintain their tolerance, their courage and their unity in the face of community dissension and strife?

Part III. What Ministers and Churches Need To Learn About Tense Industrial Situations

by Stoddard Lane and Albert W. Palmer

The greatest values that can come out of a painful experience like the Newton incident are not to be found in assessing blame but in trying to learn a better technique for meeting such times of industrial tension. There are hundreds of churches in similar small cities dominated by a single industry. Things get down to personal issues very promptly in such a community. In the discussion which follows we are dealing with the larger problems of policy and program for any minister and any church.

A. The Minister

Obviously the minister's ability to meet a tense industrial situation helpfully and constructively will depend in part on how much he knows. He needs to prepare a long time in advance. His training in the theological seminary, and even in college, should have included courses in economics, sociology, labor problems and social ethics. If it has not, there are good Home Study courses offered by some of our best universities, and also summer schools and pastors' institutes which he may well attend. A letter to the Council for Social Action will bring him a reading list suggesting good books in these fields. If the minister feels he is too busy to do serious study in social, economic and labor problems, then he had better not accept a charge in an industrial community.

The minister also needs to be trained in the spirit and approach of a teacher. The psychology of people, especially the semi-hysterical reactions of groups excited by propaganda should be well known to him. As a teacher he will ask not only "What is true?" but also, "How can this truth actually make its way into the people's minds?" He will realize the terrible "sales resistance" arising from fear, prejudice, economic self-

interest and social pressures, both open and concealed. The minister, as a skillful teacher, will take the measure of the stupidity and mental impenetrability of an hysterical community and match his wits against it. He will often have to bide his time and, like a good general, choose his battle ground and not let it be forced upon him. In the end he will turn his enemy's flank by being so patient, persistent and skillful a teacher that he can forestall or undermine the forces of hatred, prejudice and fear. Martyrdom is one way of teaching, but it is a bitter and costly way, only to be used in last resort.

It will also help if, to technical knowledge, teaching skill, patience and fairness, he can add a salty sense of humor. Not the humor which holds people up to ridicule but a humor like Lincoln's which relieves tense situations and makes fun of nobody but himself. Exercising a genuine sense of humor does not mean that the minister is to equivocate. Sometimes there is a value in being on the fence, as Arthur Holt once observed, because from that vantage point you can see what is happening on both sides. But when the time comes for a show-down, the minister must come down off the fence and stand by his convictions firmly. "Speaking truth in love," the new Testament puts it.

To effectively take a stand on a controversial issue the minister must have prepared, so far as he can, the mental attitudes of his church members. He does this preparing, first of all, by winning their confidence in him as a disciple of Jesus Christ and their regard for him as the shepherd of their souls. His remarks at funerals and christenings and weddings, the books he has reviewed and criticized, the great biographies he has illuminated for them, the sermons he has preached on friendship, prayer, courage, and other aspects of personal religious living, all enter into the attitudes of a congregation toward their minister. It takes years to build up this trust and confidence and the pastor newly come to a parish is at grave disadvantage

if some crisis occurs before the cement has had time to set in the bulwarks of his congregation's acceptance of him.

But even the highest personal regard will vanish like the morning dew in a period of mob hysteria unless the minister has done other things besides "selling" himself to his church people. He must also train them in methods of free speech, impartial inquiry, and tolerance. He must educate his people by gradually presenting potential issues to them at moments when such issues can be looked at calmly and discussed without rancor. He can train his church people to see both sides of questions by himself preaching sermons in which both sides are fairly presented. Perhaps he may begin with subjects on which there is no current prejudice such as "Did our Puritan ancestors mistreat the Quakers?" or "The pros and cons of Pilate," or, in some communities, "Catholics and Protestants: What could they learn from one another?" If this presentation of controversial issues is done wisely, tactfully and with a little spice of humor, the minister may help to establish mental attitudes which will have a cooling effect on the spirit of too heated and cock-sure partisanship. He may recall the story about the man who, when asked which side he favored, replied: "I haven't decided yet; but, when I do, I assure you I shall be very bitter!"

After some training in the direction of fair analysis and generous appraisal of disputed questions which have been in cold-storage, more or less, for several hundred years, the minister may then lead on to the more delicate task of getting people to view, with similar self-control and candor, questions in which they themselves are personally concerned. Ultimately churches must be able to review the current social and economic issues calmly and intelligently. They must seek to appraise the issues in the light of Christian teaching or else they will have to deny any relevancy of Christian teaching to some of the most vital and pressing problems which try men's souls. Church people cannot be allowed blindly to accept the

status quo, for uncritical acceptance of anything means inability really to defend it. Therefore let the minister train his people to study the Christian solution to all problems, personal, social, industrial, racial or international with an attitude of open-mindedness and a faith in free discussion. This training must begin in the Sunday School, go on with increasing range and freedom through young people's groups, continue to the adult classes, the midweek meeting and the pastor's sermons.

But when an industrial crisis occurs, when economic lines have been drawn, when ultimatums have been issued and mobilization begun, then how shall the minister deal with partisanship, propaganda, hatred, and violence?

It is said of certain Indian tribes that, when they went on a tribal drunk, they appointed one man to stay sober and remain on guard. The minister must be like that lonely Indian. He must listen and learn, try to get all the facts and struggle to maintain contact with both sides. Wealthy and conservative people are apt to be sensitive about a minister who neglects them and seems to devote himself too exclusively to the radicals or to the poor and lowly. Jesus associated with all. Publicans, sinners, Simon the Pharisee and Nicodemus were all within the circle of his social contacts.

It will probably be just as well if the minister listens much, asks many questions, delivers few spoken pronouncements and no written ones during a volcanic disturbance. A wise and experienced business man gives this rule which seems to be founded on sound insight into human nature: "Concerning things that are pleasant, write. Concerning things that are difficult, confer!" Letters, after all, are cold things, capable of being grievously misconstrued. Anonymous letters are cowardly, of course, but even signed letters do not always do what you want them to do. It may take more nerve to talk over unpleasant things face to face but such talk is more likely to bring favorable results, especially when one's attitude is that

of invincible good-will. Diplomacy is never successfully conducted by ultimatums.

Sometimes the minister may render his most effective service in a difficult local situation by appealing to outside influences. Such appeal, of course, has elements of danger. No community likes interference from outsiders. The Irishman who before joining in a riot had the tact first to inquire, "Is this a private fight or can any one get into it?" exhibited a wisdom probably born of long experience. Nevertheless, the minister belongs to something bigger than the local church and community. He belongs also to his denomination and, beyond that, to the Kingdom of God. He has, therefore, a right and a duty to look to all possible restraining and healing forces in the larger community, in church or state, for help and counsel.

One way in which the minister can lay hold of outside help before an issue is too sharply drawn is by inviting interesting and well-informed speakers who can present various aspects of controversial subjects in open forums or panel discussions. A debating team can be invited in, or a group of young people who have worked up a play which vividly presents some social issue. Copies of broad-minded religious publications like *Advance* and *The Missionary Herald* and *Social Action* can be circulated. It is a good thing to have strong conservative speakers as well as liberals address the forum, providing they are willing to meet the written questions that are sent up from the audience. Anyone who advocates free speech must see that various aspects of controversial questions are recognized and their advocates given opportunity to make fair and adequate presentation. By practicing tolerance and fair play toward others, the minister will greatly strengthen his influence against the day when he may need tolerance and fair play for himself.

Another way in which the minister can save himself from too great isolation or loneliness is by so linking himself and his church to the denomination that he can appeal to the larger

body for reinforcement and aid. In Congregational Churches this can be done by appealing for a mutual council of advice and conciliation if his church seeks to deal with him in arbitrary fashion. Even if the church will not consent to calling such a council, it is still the minister's privilege to call an *ex parte* council and lay his case before the pastors and delegates of the neighboring churches. If the local church sees that he is in earnest about calling such a council they will probably decide that it is better to be represented at it after all.

The calling of such a council gives a breathing spell and becomes a safeguard against hasty, unjust or ill-considered action. Moreover, the council may effect a reconciliation.

It may be well also to remind the minister, in a community where tense industrial situations are likely to occur, not to fail to make ample recognition of the generosity and large-mindedness of the people in the pews who listen, oftentimes with really remarkable patience, to social philosophy they heartily disagree with. And yet they go on listening and disagreeing and contributing to the minister's salary. Let the minister ask himself if he is sure he could be as courteous, long suffering and tolerant if the situation were reversed. As one layman put it, concerning a minister whose social message was unusually vigorous and outspoken: "We are only about 51 per cent for his ideas but we are 95 per cent for him!" A minister should recognize such generous attitudes and let his appreciation be known.

B. The Church

Now what about the church? How can it learn a better technique when confronted by a delicate and explosive industrial situation?

Several things may be suggested. First of all the church must think deeply in advance about its function in the community. Is the church merely a rather exclusive high-grade religious club made up of the "best" people? Or is it representative of

an age-long world-wide fellowship of the followers of Jesus seeking to make his ideals significant in the lives of men and in all the affairs of the community? What are the facts about the town in which the church exists? How many children are not attending Sunday School? How many families, not of the Catholic faith, are outside of any vital contact with protestant churches? Why? What are their attitudes toward the churches? What can be done to change their attitudes? Should not a church be as concerned about reaching such families as a foreign missionary is expected to be concerned about reaching the non-Christian masses round about his mission station?

A church which develops what the Quakers call a "concern" along this line may discover some very disquieting economic and social facts. Should it not then face the facts in a deeply Christian spirit? Can it be content to be a "class" church? Ought it not rather to seek a balanced membership which is a cross section of the community? Is it really safe for a church which desires to be spiritually free to derive its economic support from a few large givers, or its membership solely from the white collar class? Ought it not, on the other hand, to be keenly conscious that Jesus was a carpenter and that the apostles were fishermen, and so be as eager to welcome the secretary of the labor union as the manager of the factory? Then, when trouble comes, this church will be able to have a better understanding of the viewpoint and feelings of both sides.

But, before trouble comes, and possibly to the end that it may never come, will not the church do well to face frankly and searchingly the economic implications of the Christian gospel? The great Oxford Conference of 1937 at which all non-Roman Catholic Christendom was represented has adopted some very clear and definite findings about the relationship of the Church to social and economic problems. Should not the church carefully review and evaluate these Oxford findings, not in some future day of controversy but *now* in the cool clear

light of reason and Christian good-will? The Oxford report reminds us:

"Christians have a double duty—both to bear witness to their faith within the existing economic order and also to test all economic institutions in the light of their understanding of God's will. The forces of evil against which Christians have to contend are found not only in the hearts of men as individuals, but have entered into and infected the structure of society, and there also must be combated. . . . In the economic sphere the first duty of the Church is to insist that economic activities, like every other department of human life, stand under the judgment of Christ. The existence of economic classes presents a barrier to human fellowship which cannot be tolerated by the Christian conscience. Indefensible inequalities of opportunity in regard to education, leisure, and health continue to prevail. The ordering of economic life has tended to enhance acquisitiveness and to set up a false standard of economic and social success. . . . Christianity becomes socially futile if it does not recognize that love must will justice and that the Christian is under an obligation to secure the best possible social and economic structure, in so far as such structure is determined by human decisions. . . . Labour has intrinsic worth and dignity, as being designed by God for man's welfare. The duty and the right of men to work should therefore alike be emphasized. In the industrial process labour should never be considered as a mere commodity. In their daily work men should be able to recognize and fulfil a Christian vocation. The working man, whether in field or factory, is entitled to a living wage, wholesome surroundings, and a recognized voice in the decisions which affect his welfare as a worker. . . . A Church which is prophetic and apostolic, as the Christian fellowship is meant to be, will live under a divine compulsion to realize the perfection of God, as completely as human imperfection will allow, in every concrete situation of its life—and having done all, its members will know themselves to be 'unprofitable servants.' "

From general social and economic problems the church should turn to consider its conception of its own minister. Is he merely a hired man to be discharged at will or is he an interpreter of religion to be treated with respect and deference?

Let the church ask itself such questions as these: "What effect will it have on preaching if freedom of the pulpit is

curtailed? How does violent and arbitrary treatment of a pastor impress those outside the church? Does it heighten their respect for the church or the minister? What effect does it have on young men who may be contemplating the Christian ministry as a life-work?"

If, in spite of all the church can do, trouble does break out, what still remains to be done? First of all the church can let its pastor know that deeply sympathetic recognition is given to the added difficulties of his task. He should be upheld in prayer. He should not be crowded into any position of partisanship but rather it should be assumed that he is the one man who can be depended upon to be fair, objective and impartial. Then, of course, the minister is more likely to try to live up to this expectation.

The church probably should also be on its guard at such a time against false and damaging rumors about its minister. Rumors are like atrocity stories in war. They are especially to be distrusted if they originate or are peddled about by people outside the church or by disaffected members. A trusted minister ought to get the benefit of the doubt, and should certainly be frankly informed of all such whispered gossip or innuendo.

Churches are often so beset by problems of finance that they tend to be the victims of excessive timidity. How to finance themselves becomes a much bigger and more carefully considered question than any urgency about proclaiming and exemplifying the spirit of Jesus in all the affairs of life. If a church will be content with a modest building which it can afford to own, and with a budget broad-based on the democratic foundation of many gifts from the rank and file of its membership, its officers will then find it easier to support a courageous pastor when he conscientiously has to take a broader view than some of his parishioners approve. This support will be doubly guaranteed if the church has accustomed itself to facing facts, to hearing both sides of disputed questions and to

cherishing civil and religious liberty as a precious heritage from the martyrs and spiritual pioneers who have gone before.

Supporting the minister does not mean that the minister is above criticism or never to be disagreed with. By no means. He needs the corrective of frank and honest, man-to-man, discussion. The privilege of free speech involves the willingness to listen to and accept free criticism. The wise church and the tactful minister will welcome this exchange of opinion and go to some trouble to make definite provision for it. Why would it not be wise for a church and minister facing a tense industrial situation to have a regular time when the pastor could meet his key men and women to discuss all angles of the situation with perfect frankness as Christian friends? Sometimes such discussions might save the pastor from going to extremes—and sometimes the church!

Moreover local church members need to remember that a local church is not merely an independent local club with no responsibility to the great body of the Christian Church. Rather, the local church exists because of gifts and influences which have come to it from outside. It belongs to the fellowship of all the churches. It depends on that fellowship to train and credential its ministers, to train the members who come to it by letter, to carry on a far flung program of missionary work and educational activity by which it becomes a great world influence. The church which faces difficulty with its minister should not therefore deal with him in arbitrary or peremptory manner but rather seek the counsel of other churches through the proper ecclesiastical channels so that the balanced and healing judgment of a Christian consensus of opinion may protect both pastor and people from precipitate action which might leave memories of regret when the passion and hysteria of a heated local situation have subsided.

Finally, the church has one technique for meeting tense situations which no other body is apt to use and that is the practice of common prayer. More problems can be solved, or greatly

clarified and helped toward solution by bringing them into a prayerful worship service than most of us have faith to believe. In common prayer men can lift their whole problem into the presence of Christ, and try to let the light of his truth, his values, his graciousness shine upon it. Our little one-sided views stand to be corrected by the largeness of God's all-enfolding love and understanding. We wait in his spirit to receive rebuke, if need be, and balance and guidance from on high. All Christians may well learn something from the Quakers in these matters. The Quakers do not take close and excited votes after feverish debate, but rather, after free but considerate discussion, seek the guidance of the spirit and wait patiently until the inner light shall break upon them. Would not churches and ministers facing times of industrial crisis do well to remember that, as Christian organizations and believers, they should not neglect to gather together to pray about the issues, dangers and differences confronting them?

In closing let us make a practical recommendation to the State Conferences. Would it not be wise to anticipate the need which may arise at any time for counsel and mediation in industrial disputes by having set up in advance, and therefore always ready to respond, an adjustment committee on social issues to which either a church or a pastor, or both, could appeal as difficult social situations begin to develop? This would be less formal and ponderous than the calling of an ecclesiastical council and would have more the effect of locking the stable before the horse is stolen. Such a state social adjustment committee should be composed of both laymen and ministers who have had some background of experience with labor disputes. Such a committee of conciliation and adjustment in social crises would indicate that social action may well be as ameliorating and interpretative in some situations as it has to be critical, searching and even provocative in others.

LOOKING AHEAD

SOCIAL ACTION has celebrated its fourth anniversary and with this issue commences its fifth year. From now on it is going to come out in somewhat larger size, and ten instead of twelve times *per annum*. In other words, it will skip July and August in order to concentrate on the other months. The subscription price will remain the same but there will be minor changes in the quantity prices, as indicated on page two.

We think this present number is going to prove very useful and helpful to churches, laymen, and ministers who are really anxious to know how to meet labor troubles in a Christian way. And we invite you to look ahead with us to see what SOCIAL ACTION is promising for the rest of 1939. The prospect seems definitely exhilarating.

Next month there will be a Memorial Number — a recognition of Graham Taylor and a tribute to his lifelong work in behalf of Christian social action. We expect in March to publish a first hand report of the Pan American Conference at Lima, Peru. In April, a number given over to Civil Liberties — their importance in a Christian democracy, how to preserve them and extend them. In May, an issue devoted to Farm Life. We hope in June to make public a thoroughgoing estimate of the meaning and value of the Economic Plebiscite.

Skipping July and August, the Labor Sunday issue will deal with the specific problem of the Negro in Industry. We will try in October to have ready a report upon the subject of Ministers' Salaries. In November we expect to publish a special number on the Anti-Jewish Movement and its relation to democracy and the rights of minorities. And in December for the Advent Season we will present a thoughtful statement of the relationship between Christian Evangelism and Social Action.

Here then is a whole year seen through the eyes of *Social Action*. You who are already seeing things through *Social Action's* eyes are urged to introduce the magazine to all your friends, so that they may learn to look out at the world and events through the same lenses.

—DWIGHT J. BRADLEY